

## Croydon Council Housing Questionnaire – CCHA

1. How many homes do you currently operate?

CCHA have approximately 1500 homes. The majority of those are in Croydon but we also have homes in Bromley, Sutton and Merton.

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2. What are the different types of tenure that you have within your stock?

The majority of our stock in general needs housing but we also have a large number of homes for older persons living independently and approximately 250 homes for supported housing.

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3. How much do you spend on maintenance on average per property?

Our direct cost per property at the end of last financial year was £798 per property

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4. Can you summarise your housing stock maintenance programme/expenditure

Our day to day maintenance spend per property is detailed above. We have recently employed a SME, Gilmartins, to undertake our repairs and maintenance on the short term interim contract until we can re-procure our main long term contract following the withdrawal of Mears. For the interim contract we have moved back to schedule of rates but were operating a price per property system which is how we are likely to run the new long term contract. This provides us with much more price certainty on our budgets.

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5. Can you summarise your housing stock investment (major works) programs.

We do undertake a stock condition survey of 20% of our stock year on year to ensure that the information about our homes is accurate and up to date. This then drives our planned maintenance programme for the next five years.

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6. How many new homes have you built over the past ten years in Croydon?

We have built 109 homes over the last ten years but 79 homes have been built in the last 3-4 years under the current Commitment2020 business plan where growth and new development are a key objective for us.

7. How many homes have you planned to build over the next ten years in Croydon?

Under commitment2020 we have a further 73 homes either on site or getting into contract and a further 80 homes to find to complete the programme.

8. What are the average net rents on your new build homes in Croydon?

The majority of our homes are still on social rent but the average weekly rent for our homes built under the affordable rent regime is £125 per week (1 bed) to £230 per week (3 bed). We are now currently developing for London Affordable rent which is at a similar level to those on social rent.

9. What are the average service charges on your new build homes in Croydon?

The new build homes to date have been on Affordable rent where service charge is included in the rent but service charge levels if charged would be around £130 per month but again this varies quite a lot dependent upon the facilities on the site such as a lift, CCTV, door entry etc.

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10. How many homes have you sold under Right to Buy?

We do not operate the RTB scheme we only operate a Right to Acquire scheme and we have had a maximum of one per year. We recently have had a significant amount of enquiries but these have not come through as purchases as yet.

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11. Regarding your properties in Croydon, how has your organisation responded to the events of Grenfell Tower?

We currently do not have any buildings higher than five stories and none with full cladding so we were not a high risk but obviously are residents in flats were still concerned. The first thing was to ensure that we had a communication strategy for our own residents and information went out to them within the first week after Grenfell. Health and safety compliance has always been a priority but clearly fire safety has become very high profile and so we are trying to work with the fire safety officers to ensure that our buildings are and remain compliant. We will of course take heed of any further recommendations that come out of Dame Hackett's review and the recent Green paper.

12. What types of tenancies do you offer your tenants?

Predominantly our residents are on Assured tenancies but for residents who live in larger homes (over three bedroom) or adapted properties they will be on a five year fixed term tenancy and the need for that property will be assessed every five years.

13. What is your response to London and Quadrant's recent actions to phase out fixed-term tenancies?

This is something that we are certainly going to be looking into for the future.

14. What are the average rents for your relet properties?

15. What are the average service charges for your relet properties?

16. How many tenants have you evicted from your properties over the past ten years, and why?

We evict approximately 4 residents a year and generally at least 50% of these are for ASB not rent arrears. We are committed as part of our business plan Commitment2020 to never evict someone who is engaging with us about their arrears.

17. What support do you offer to residents who are experiencing financial difficulties?

We have an in house welfare and debt advisor who last year supported 141 residents, enabling them to claim additional benefits, rationalising their spending and making sure they are saving money where they can such as on utilities.

18. What support do you offer to vulnerable residents?

There are various ways that residents can be supported dependent upon what type of home they are in. In supported housing and older persons living the support is more structured but in general needs accommodation residents will have their own designated tenancy management officer who they can contact if there are any issues.

19. What support do you offer to residents who are experiencing domestic violence?

Our staff are very experienced but they are not specialists in Domestic Violence so they would use the support of outside agencies in order to support the resident. Obviously if a move was required we would organise this as quickly as required.

20. Can you share with us your resident satisfaction information for your tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders please?

Our current resident satisfaction is at 74%, which is poor by our own standards but we have had a recent estate services contract breakdown and as such the residents were extremely unhappy quite rightly so. We have now changed contractors and it is improving but is not there yet. We only currently have 13 leaseholders and 4 shared owners so we do not complete separate surveys for them.

21. Which parts of your services get the most complaints?

In normal circumstances it would be repairs but our level of complaints is generally extremely low, possibly 45 formal complaints per year. However, last year due to the estate services contract it was a mixture of repairs and estate services.

22. In your view, what are the main barriers to investment that you currently face?

We are committed to investing in Croydon as I hope you can see from our programme but also from our roots which have been firmly in Croydon since 1967. There are three areas which we feel could be improved:

The planning process – I have had some very good experiences dealing with the planning team but also some very poor with responses being delayed by weeks in some cases. The planning process needs to be simpler and the response quicker in order for us to deliver the number of homes that are required for Croydon.

Universal Credit – I understand that this is not a Croydon initiative but it is severely affective our ability to perform and protect our rental income which in turn gives us the confidence to build more homes. We currently have 212 residents on UC which is approximately 14% of all residents. Our rent arrears for those not on UC is 2.05% as opposed to those on UC which is at 8.25%.

Changes in supported housing – whilst we do not carry out the support any more we still own and manage homes which are designated supported housing and as an organization whose roots are in supported housing this is not likely to change. However, all of the changes in services and funding is affecting the way we are able to run our buildings and as a result we will be looking to change our model for supported housing going forwards.

Croydon could help us I feel by being more responsive, we have good relationships with all of the teams that we deal with but decisions in every area of the business tend to take longer than I believe is necessary. I do realise and appreciate of course that we have the benefit of being a small organisation and as such can make decisions much quicker with less people to inform and consult.

